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The Arbitration Treaties.

We had expected to be able to announce in this issue that the arbitration treaties, which were sent by President Roosevelt to the Senate in December, had been ratified by that body. But as we go to press with our February number no action has yet been taken on them. The Committee on Foreign Affairs, to which they were referred, has not yet even reported on them.

There remains but four weeks until Congress will adjourn, and it begins to look as if the treaties were doomed to failure. Even if they are favorably reported by the Committee on Foreign Relations, they will have to meet their real peril in the body of the Senate. The latest reports from Washington say that all of the Republican members of the committee, and some of the Democratic members, are in favor of the approval of the treaties without amendment. They will probably, therefore, be within a short time favorably reported.

The delay of these treaties has been a source of great disappointment throughout the country. It is rare, indeed, that public measures receive such practically unanimous support as they have received.

The great business organizations in the cities have urged prompt action on them, as have popular mass meetings, and all sorts of organizations interested in the public welfare. Newspaper approval of them has been likewise remarkably strong. The case in their favor has seemed to the people so clear and strong that they have been unable to get it through their heads how such a body of men as the Senate could find any reasonable ground for opposing them.

The Irish opposition to the treaty with Great Britain—they have opposed no others—we do not believe has had any influence on the Senate. It has been feeble at the best, and so utterly baseless that it has made no serious impression. Their cry has been that we should avoid any kind of an alliance with Great Britain, that she is endeavoring through this treaty to get us into a position where we shall be compelled to pull her chestnuts out of the fire for her, support her in her wars, land robberies, etc. But how a treaty that is to run for only five years, that excludes from its operation questions of "vital interest" and national "honor," and provides only for the submission to the Hague Court of questions of a judicial order and those arising in the interpretation of treaties, can be twisted into the semblance of an alliance, under which we shall be pulled around by the nose at the sweet will of England, passes comprehension. Why should not the simple treaty, if it possesses such mysterious power, be just as likely to work the other way, and England's nose get pulled? And why are not the treaties with other countries, drawn in identical terms, just as dangerous as the one with Great Britain? Our Irish friends, who are usually ready to support all of the best forward movements, have for once lost their sense of humor. They will be sorry later that they have allowed their dislike of England, however justifiable it may be from a historic point of view, to lead them blindly to oppose one of the best measures of civilization ever put forward.

No less baseless are the grounds of opposition advanced by certain Senators. But they are sufficient, if persisted in, to kill the treaties. The absurd rule of the Senate never to limit debate makes it possible for one or two stubborn men to worry any measure to death. President Roosevelt has told the Southern Senators that the proposal to collect repudiated State carpet-bag bonds through the Hague Court, and thus to coerce the State governments, is a proposition that would not be entertained by any President. That

pledges his own administration for four years, and the treaties would run but one year longer. If they should be found after five years of trial to be so dreadfully dangerous as Senator Bacon and his friends fear, it would be a very easy thing to modify them before extending them for another period.

Some Senators persist in saying that they will not allow the treaties to pass until so amended that each particular agreement to refer a case to the Hague Court shall be first submitted to the Senate for its ratification. This is a singular position to take in regard to treaties which specify in advance the kind of cases to be submitted to arbitration. It proceeds on the assumption that the State Department is not to be trusted, and that it would not be capable, with the advice and counsel of all the eminent legal talent that it employs, of deciding between questions of a judicial order and those affecting the so-called essential interests and honor of the nation.

To agree in advance to refer to the Hague Court controversies, the reference of which must again be agreed upon at the time when they arise, is to agree to nothing at all, and we confess that we would rather see the treaties openly rejected than adopted in this ridiculous form, in which, of course, they could never be ratified by other self-respecting nations. We refuse to believe that the Senate will allow itself to be betrayed into any such stultifying action, and we still hold to our first faith that the treaties will be ratified and our country thereby restored to its normal place in the greatest movement of our time.

The Eastern War and the Theories of John de Bloch.

Our readers are aware of the extraordinary interest awakened by the publication eight years ago of "The Future of War" by the eminent Polish economist and financier, John de Bloch. The theories of the future of war contained in his great six-volume work, with its critical analysis of military processes, were soon widely accepted by many advanced internationalists, and it was confidently expected that his reasonings were to be the chief hammers with which the whole war-system was to be beaten in pieces.

It is well known that his work had large influence on the Czar of Russia in inducing him to issue the call for the Hague Conference. Mr. Bloch, who was alive at the time of the Boer war, believed, and published the view in pamphlets, that that conflict had in certain important respects proved the essential correctness of his contention that war between first-class powers had become impossible, unless they were prepared to face either inevitable bankruptcy and ruin, or entire failure to obtain what they sought by arms.

We confess that Mr. Bloch's reasonings, profound

and exhaustive as they were, never seemed to us as conclusive as he thought them to be. He did not take sufficiently into account the changed methods which warfare with the new weapons and deadly explosives might have been expected to adopt. His conclusions were certainly valid for warfare in the old way. But the changes in the art of fighting have been as great as those in the character of the weapons, and for many of these he did not make proper allowance; in fact, he does not seem to have suspected some of them.

The South African war, too, was fought under conditions altogether too unique to furnish safe conclusions for a conflict between first-class powers.

Bloch seems also to have overlooked one of the plainest lessons of history, that the invention of new and more deadly weapons has never had any appreciable effect in preventing war. The prophecies of this kind — and they have been many since the invention of gunpowder — have all proved false. The improved weapons have been met by new devices and tactics for counteracting their destructiveness, and the courage of armies has never faltered before them.

It is too early yet to say that the Russo-Japanese war, the first great war fought under the new conditions, will discredit every one of Mr. Bloch's positions. But so far it has certainly given them little or no support. The deadliness of the weapons has had no deterrent effect upon the troops on either side. Men have never marched to battle or made assaults with greater readiness. Nor has it had any influence in restraining the governments at home from sending their citizens to slaughter by tens of thousands. There is no reason to believe that if the war were between any of the great powers of the West, — Great Britain, France, Germany, the United States, for example, — either the soldiers or the governments would have behaved at all differently from those of Japan and Russia.

Nor, again, have the engagements so far, either at Port Arthur or in the interior, proved that one man on the defensive is equal to ten, or five, or even two, on the offensive. The war has demonstrated the extraordinary effectiveness, under modern conditions, of flanking movements, even with a moderate superiority of numbers, to a degree which Mr. Bloch does not seem to have suspected. It has shown also that frontal attacks, because they are made in open formation, are not at all so deadly as he figured out that they would be. Even fighting with the bayonet has not been rendered impossible.

Nor on the financial side does the war, though it has now been in progress a year, show any apparent symptoms of breaking down. The sources of supply at home have not been seriously interfered with by the mobilization and withdrawal of the large armies. This mobilization, on the part of Japan at least, has been, in proportion to her population, of the very